United Nations ST/AI/2018/10

Secretariat

5 November 2018

Administrative instruction

Rest and recuperation

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2009/4, and for the purpose of implementing General Assembly resolution 65/248, section C, paragraphs 6 and 8, and resolutions 66/235 A and B, promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

Purpose

1.1 Staff members appointed or assigned to work for extended periods at designated duty stations under hazardous, stressful and difficult conditions shall be granted regular periods of rest and recuperation to protect their health and well-being and ensure optimal work performance upon the resumption of their duties, while preserving the operational readiness of the Organization. Rest and recuperation is a means by which staff members may take regular authorized time outside the duty station approved for rest and recuperation to be given a break from the dangerous, stressful and difficult working and living conditions under which they serve. Rest and recuperation is not an additional annual leave entitlement or financial compensation for the degree of hardship and insecurity of a duty station.

1.2 The authorized time off for rest and recuperation shall consist of five consecutive calendar days not charged to annual leave, plus actual travel time.[1] To ensure that the purpose set out in section 1.1 above is achieved, rest and recuperation shall be granted once the conditions set out in section 3 below have been met.

Eligibility

1.3 The following individuals shall be eligible for rest and recuperation:

[1] Travel time is granted to enable travel between the duty station and the designated rest and recuperation destination. It is determined on the basis of the actual time that staff members are expected to spend travelling from the place of duty to the designated rest and recuperation location by the fastest means and most direct route. Staff members may avail themselves of rest and recuperation at a destination other than the designated rest and recuperation destination. Irrespective of the destination where they avail themselves of rest and recuperation, the travel time granted is that which has been approved for travel to and from the duty station and the rest and recuperation destination.

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(a) Internationally recruited staff members appointed, assigned or on travel status to a duty station approved for rest and recuperation;

(b) Locally recruited staff members on travel status to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation, provided the duty station is in a country other than the country of the parent duty station.

1.4 The benefit of rest and recuperation does not extend to family members.

Section 2
Approval of duty stations for rest and recuperation

2.1 Duty stations shall be approved for rest and recuperation by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management in accordance with the framework for rest and recuperation contained in the annex to the present administrative instruction and following inter-agency consultations.

2.2 The approval of a duty station for rest and recuperation and the length of the rest and recuperation cycle are subject to periodic review. The approval and the length of the rest and recuperation cycle may be introduced, adjusted or discontinued dependent on the prevailing conditions at the duty station.

2.3 Duty stations approved for rest and recuperation, as well as the effective date of approval and subsequent changes, if any, shall be published by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management in an information circular.[2]

Effect of change in approval status

2.4 Staff members already present at a duty station newly approved for rest and recuperation shall begin to accrue qualifying service from the effective date of the approval. If the rest and recuperation cycle is reduced, staff members may immediately avail themselves of rest and recuperation on the basis of the new rest and recuperation cycle, subject to meeting the period of qualifying service. If the rest and recuperation cycle is lengthened, staff members who had started accruing qualifying service prior to the effective date of the new cycle may avail themselves of rest and recuperation after completing the period of qualifying service previously in effect at the duty station. Upon return of the staff members to the duty station, the new frequency shall apply.

2.5 In the event that the rest and recuperation benefit is discontinued, staff members who had started accruing qualifying service prior to the effective date of the discontinuance may avail themselves of rest and recuperation after completing the period of qualifying service previously in effect at the duty station. The benefit shall cease to apply upon their return to the duty station.

Rest and recuperation destinations

2.6 The rest and recuperation destination is a location conducive to rest designated by the Office of Human Resources Management to provide relief from a hazardous, stressful and difficult environment. The Assistant Secretary-General of Human Resources Management shall, following inter-agency consultations, designate the rest and recuperation destinations in an information circular.

2.7 The Organization takes into consideration the availability of United Nations transportation when designating rest and recuperation destinations. Staff members,

[2] The list of duty stations approved for rest and recuperation is available from the human resources portal at https://hr.un.org/handbook/ and the United Nations intranet at https://iseek.un.org/administrativeissuances.

however, may travel to any location outside of the duty station other than the designated rest and recuperation destination, subject to the provisions of section 4.5 below.

Section 3
Rest and recuperation conditions

Conditions

3.1 Staff members shall be granted time off for rest and recuperation after serving the period of qualifying service in the duty station approved for rest and recuperation and subject to the provisions below. Qualifying service is the presence of a staff member at the duty station for the period corresponding to the rest and recuperation cycle authorized for that duty station, subject to the provisions below.

3.2 Rest and recuperation shall not be granted during the last 30 calendar days of a staff member's service. Staff members are required to reimburse the full cost of the most recent rest and recuperation travel unless they serve at their duty stations for a minimum of 30 calendar days upon return from rest and recuperation. Staff members shall not be required to reimburse the Organization if:

(a) They are transferred to another duty station that is approved for rest and recuperation;

(b) The non-observance of the 30-day requirement is at the request of the Organization, as determined by the head of office or director/chief of mission support.

Qualifying service

3.3 In order to be granted time off for rest and recuperation, qualifying service at a duty station approved for rest and recuperation must be uninterrupted.

3.4 The period of qualifying service shall run from the date on which staff members arrive at the duty station or from the date on which they return to the duty station after an absence on rest and recuperation.

3.5 Qualifying service shall not be interrupted or suspended when:

(a) Travel outside the duty station on official business, including travel for training purposes, is to a duty station approved for rest and recuperation;

(b) There is a transfer or reassignment from one duty station approved for rest and recuperation to another such duty station, and the staff members do not avail themselves of leave. In such a case, qualifying service accrued at the first duty station may be carried forward to calculate the overall qualifying service for rest and recuperation at the new duty station.

3.6 Qualifying service shall be suspended when travel on official business is to a duty station that is not approved for rest and recuperation. When qualifying service has been suspended, the period of qualifying service will resume from the date on which the staff members return to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation.

3.7 Qualifying service is interrupted when staff members are absent from the duty station approved for rest and recuperation for more than three consecutive or cumulative working days on any type of authorized leave, whether taken separately or in conjunction with official business travel. When qualifying service is interrupted, any service accrued prior to the interruption shall be forfeited. The accrual of qualifying service shall commence upon the staff members' return to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation.

Duration of rest and recuperation absence from the duty station and combination with other types of authorized absence

3.8 Absence on rest and recuperation is granted for five consecutive days not charged to annual leave. It includes non-working days, that is, weekends and official holidays, that may fall during the five-day period. In addition, travel time from and back to the duty station is granted on the day when actual travel takes place.

3.9 Subject to exigencies of service, rest and recuperation may be taken in conjunction with annual leave, certified sick leave, uncertified sick leave authorized in relation to a family-related emergency and travel on official business. When rest and recuperation is combined with annual leave or uncertified sick leave for a family-related emergency, the period on annual leave or uncertified sick leave shall commence after completion of the period for rest and recuperation. When rest and recuperation is combined with annual leave, any illness occurring during the period of annual leave shall be subject to the provisions of staff rule 6.2 (e).

3.10 When staff members are permitted to combine rest and recuperation with travel on official business or other type of authorized absence for their personal convenience, any additional costs above the authorized entitlement in respect of the official business travel or other type of authorized absence shall be borne by the staff member. The Organization shall not be responsible for any additional expenses or liabilities that may be incurred as a result of combining rest and recuperation with travel on official business or other type of authorized absence, including any costs incurred in connection with delays, ticket changes, cancellations or fare increases.

3.11 Rest and recuperation may not be combined with any of the following:

(a) Travel on home leave, family visit or reverse education grant;

(b) Maternity leave, paternity leave, uncertified sick leave, except when used for a family-related emergency, or special leave;

(c) Travel on departure from the duty station approved for rest and recuperation at the end of the staff members' appointments or assignments, unless the staff members are transferred or reassigned to another duty station approved for rest and recuperation and do not take any leave.

3.12 Should such a combination as detailed above occur after the approval or commencement of rest and recuperation, all days previously authorized as rest and recuperation shall be charged to annual leave or other leave, as appropriate.

Timing of rest and recuperation

3.13 Rest and recuperation must be taken within 30 calendar days following completion of the period of qualifying service and shall be forfeited if the staff members elect not to take it within the prescribed period. Should exigencies of service, as determined by the head of office or director/chief of mission support, prevent the staff members from leaving the duty station for the purpose of rest and recuperation within that period, rest and recuperation may be taken on an exceptional basis during the next 30 calendar days. A new period of qualifying service shall begin upon the staff members' return to the duty station.

3.14 Rest and recuperation may not be taken in advance, carried forward from one qualifying period to the next or combined with subsequent rest and recuperation periods.

3.15 In exceptional circumstances attributable to exigencies of service, the head of office or director/chief of mission support may allow an earlier departure of up to a maximum of seven calendar days before the staff members would have otherwise satisfied the required qualifying service. In such instances, the qualifying service

towards the next rest and recuperation cycle will be extended by the same number of days as that authorized for the early departure. Departure on the subsequent rest and recuperation shall be contingent upon completion of the requisite period of qualifying service for that rest and recuperation cycle.

Section 4
Transportation

4.1 The Organization shall pay for the cost of travel in the lowest fare, economy class, by the cheapest and most direct route from the duty station approved for rest and recuperation to the designated rest and recuperation destination. When air travel provided by the United Nations is not available or feasible, the Organization shall pay for travel by the fastest and cheapest surface mode of transportation. The Organization may purchase the ticket or provide a lump-sum payment equivalent to the cost of the air ticket or surface mode of transportation that it would have otherwise purchased had the staff members travelled to the designated rest and recuperation destination. This applies to all staff members, irrespective of their level.

4.2 Where United Nations transportation is available, it will be provided free of charge to transport staff members to and from the designated rest and recuperation destination. No payment for travel costs will apply.

4.3 Payment of the lump sum is not applicable where:

(a) United Nations transportation is available at the duty station approved for rest and recuperation and the staff members opt, for their personal convenience, to travel on a date on which United Nations transportation is not available; or,

(b) Rest and recuperation is combined with travel on official business.

4.4 Staff members shall not receive a daily subsistence allowance or terminal expenses when travelling on or for the duration of their rest and recuperation. This also applies to the daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses related to continuation of travel on rest and recuperation when combined with official business travel.

4.5 Regardless of the destination chosen for travel by staff members, the Organization's financial responsibility shall be limited to the transportation costs between the duty station and the designated rest and recuperation destination.

Section 5
Relationship of rest and recuperation with other entitlements

5.1 Departure travel on home leave, family visit or reverse education grant shall not be authorized until at least 30 calendar days following the staff members' return from rest and recuperation.

5.2 No overtime or compensatory time off shall be granted to internationally recruited staff members at duty stations approved for rest and recuperation.

Section 6
Final provisions

6.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

6.2 Administrative instructions ST/AI/2011/7, ST/AI/2011/7/Amend.1 and ST/AI/2011/7/Amend.2 dated 28 June 2011, 28 December 2011 and 23 July 2012, respectively, are hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Jan **Beagle**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

Annex

Rest and recuperation framework

Frequency	*Conditions*
6 weeks[a]	Extreme situations as follows: • Very dangerous locations where staff are directly targeted as a result of their association with the United Nations or where premises are targeted, causing imminent threat to staff • Locations where there is war or active armed conflict and where staff are at high risk of becoming collateral damage
8 weeks	All non-family/restricted duty stations: • All duty stations declared by the Department of Safety and Security as restricted for all eligible dependants for security reasons • All duty stations designated as "non-family" by the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission
12 weeks	Duty stations with a high level of hardship: • Non-capital duty stations with a hardship classification of D or E • Exceptional cases of category E capital cities

[a] In exceptional cases, a four-week rest and recuperation cycle may be approved by the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission, under delegated authority from the Commission, upon the recommendation of the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.